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ABSTRACT

Approaches to increasing minority group participation (women, Chicanos, Native Americans, and Blacks) in educational research and development at large universities are addressed. It is suggested that commitment by a college to increase minority participation in research should be indicated in its mission statement. One of the major problems has been the lack of financial support for the development of researchers. It is suggested that (1) the federal government resume educational professional development grants to help generate a pool of minority researchers, and (2) funding agencies support the following features: competent researchers serving as mentors for prospective minority researchers; monitoring of the new researcher's activities after relocation from the training institution; a long-term investment in programs that develop minority researchers; and seminars, workshops, and conferences to retrain people as researchers. Strategies that universities could employ to develop researchers include: relying on core graduate courses to help students acquire educational research skills; allowing students to develop research skills through thesis work; and employing students as research assistants. Approaches to increasing the number of minority researchers include: recruiting minority students; restructuring teacher education programs toward undergraduate degrees in educational research; encouraging master's degrees in research; providing study options (e.g., evaluation, project management, educational research); and providing postdoctoral fellow programs. (SW)

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COOPERATIVE PROJECT

This paper has been identified by a joint project of The Institute on Desegregation at North Carolina Central University and ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at George Washington University. The purposes of this project are to identify, collect, and make available literature concerned with

(1) the problems of minority students in higher education in general and
(2) the problems of desegregation in historically black colleges and universities in particular.

New published and unpublished materials are reviewed and recommended by participants of the Institute on Desegratation's Interinstitutional Research Group (ID/IRG) for acquisition by ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. An annual bibliography of this material will be published under the names of ERIC and the Institute.

Various types of materials are being solicited, especially unpublished and unindexed materials, as well as publications, produced by faculty and staff members. Included in these may be unpublished faculty studies, institutional research studies, master's theses, monographs, papers presented at professional meetings, articles from general and scholarly periodicals, and conference and workshop proceedings not covered by ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education.

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If additional information is needed about this cooperative project or the criteria for selection of materials, please write or call the Director of the Institute on Desegregation at 919/683-6433, North Carolina Central University, Durham, North Carolina 27707.

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I am delighted to participate in the second annual workshop on "Educational Research and Minority Concerns," particularly when I consider the impact as well as the controversy and discussion generated by the television dramatization of Alex Haley's Roots. Haley's work raises a number of questions for those expecting to conduct research, or those already engaged in research into minority concerns. One such question is what role will institutions of higher education play in preparing minorities to become educational researchers?

In this paper I intend to discuss ways in which minority participation in research and development activities can be increased in large universities, but let me first make some stipulations. First, I will not try to review the reasons for the small number of minority researchers now at work in education. Second, this is not a research paper, inasmuch as I do not intend to present accumulated data to support my remarks. Rather, I will rely upon you to recall data from your experience (either objective or subjective) to support or possibly refute my arguments.

I begin by asking why researchers in general and minority researchers in particular, are needed? It is now a cliche' to point out that education in America is undergoing a crises. That crisis is the result of a number of pressures which have increased in intensity and have come together inviting social upheaval. Tensions arise from several incompatible attitudes, values and situtations, stability versus change, poverty versus wealth, rural life versus urbanization, youth versus age, militarism versus pacifism, authority

versus license, idealism versus pragmatism. In addition, most of us lack an historical perspective. Whatever the causes of the current educational crisis, probably few Americans would agree that education now is faced with problems different from those encountered three decades ago.

The country has changed so drastically and rapidly that the institutions that sustain it have not kept pace. Educationally, our nation is like a farmer who purchased a tractor, a truck, and a small helicopter to operate his farm but kept his workshop filled only with blacksmith and harness tools. Our social institutions-the family, the church, the government, the production-distribution system, and the schools-are the workshops that keep a nation running. When they fail to keep pace with changes in society, tensions arise between the people and their institutions. Those tensions can reach proportions that, to a certain degree, threaten both the people and their institutions. Thus, the resolution of social problems and the restructuring institutions to meet the demands of social change are the most important concerns confronting anyone who wishes the beneficient aspects of his country to survive. Our schools are key institutions, and they must be reformed so that they, in turn, can shape the society we want.

Some would like to dismantle our system and begin at the beginning. At times, I admit, that seems tc be an attractive suggestion. But citizens and educators who believe that schools, as constituted, are essential institutions in our lives today, can, through vigorous and purposeful effort, reshape those schools, reduce their problems, and thereby improve the community.

Like the blind man feeling different parts of an elephant, each of us perceives those factors that influence the management and operation of our

schools differently. But educational problems cannot be resolved without a concerted, cooperative utilization of all the nation's resources and perceptions. In short, a special effort must be made to devise tactics to maximize the use of our human resources.

I believe the lack of minority researchers in education represents one area where our human resources are shamefully wasted. I define minorities here, somewhat arbitrarily as women, Chicanos, Native Americans, and Blacks. In addition, I explicitly accept here the notion that we must focus particularly on the participation of minorities in research and development efforts at our large universities. Yet, I claim to offer nothing more than tentative views on what can be done by universities, foundations, governmental agencies, and other philanthropic organizations to increase the number of minority researchers. My definitions and emphases understood, I will suggest some steps that can be taken to make the greater participation of minority researchers a reality.

This goal requires a systematic process. This process should be based on the knowledge educators and others have accumulated in previous efforts to recruit researchers. This accumulated knowledge leads me to conclude that the key to increasing minority participation in research is an institutional commitment both included in a mission statement and followed in accordance with that statement.

Background

The involvement of minorities in research and development efforts has always been a major problem confronting institutions of higher education. Contrary to those who saw the 1960's as a period of major progress in the recruitment of minority students and faculty, the goals set forth during this period never fully materialized. Instead, once the immediate pressures

subsided, institutions largely abandoned their systematic efforts to attract minorities. Moreover, those institutions that continue concerted efforts to recruit minority faculty and students fail, in many instances, to give serious consideration to the development of educational researchers. Minority students, for their part, find themselves torn between low paying job opportunities as researchers and action-oriented jobs offering lucrative salaries.

Institutions of higher education and foundations tend to have similar problems developing minority researchers. One of the major problems has been the lack of financial support for the development of researchers. Generally, funds provided through federal grants or foundations support a given research activity. This is not to say that such research programs do not benefit minorities, only that too often it has no direct impact on the development of minority researchers.

Though the funds for educational research and development may be limited, large universities can nevertheless increase the participation of minorities in research.

Financial Resources

When one considers the current economic climate, it is unrealistic to expect universities by themselves to support the development of minority researchers. This is not to imply that there are some things a university cannot do, only that its plans must necessarily reflect its resources. External funding sources can, of course, provide valuable support. This external support invariably requires funding proposals directed toward the training of minority researchers. What I am suggesting is that the Office

of Education and The National Institution of Education resume Educational Professional Development Act type grants with the purpose of generating a pool of minority researchers. Furthermore, funding agencies can set forth guidelines which ensure that committed and competent researchers serve as mentors for prospective minority researchers. Such an effort would not only take time and patience but would require the commitment of the institution where the professional researcher is employed. There is a concomitant need to encourage institutions to go beyond supporting people in doctoral programs and to encourage those students who are willing to spend additional time applying the research methods they have learned in their courses. An integral part of any funding proposal should be the stipulation that will be made to monitor the activity of the student once the researcher moves outside the institution, his work will be monitored. This would facilitate essential changes in the program as the need for these changes became apparent.

Foundations and other funding sources must be willing to make a long term investment in programs that develop minority researchers. Developing researchers is, after all, both time-consuming and difficult. Moreover, some students will inevitably interrupt or abandon their training to work in other capacities. Thus, the commitment and investment is necessary if the number of researchers is ever to increase.

Forthcoming grants can be used to do a variety of things that contribute to the number of minority researchers. To start with, they can support seminars, workshops, and conferences designed to re-train people who already have the ability and commitment to become researchers. Support can also help

underwrite institutions of higher education in a variety of innovative ways. Research grants have, after all, traditionally afforded universities the opportunity to employ students who perform tasks defined and directed by those universities.

Program Structure

Regardless of what is done, the programs must be planned with the primary mission of graduating minority students capable and committed to function as educational researchers. Although such programs can be structured in numerous ways, a university can employ two or three recognized strategies for developing researchers. The first strategy is to rely upon core courses in a graduate program to help students acquire a basic foundation in educational research. The major problem with this approach is that it fails to provide students with much depth of understanding. The next approach relies upon a student's involvement with his or her theses to provide sufficient research skills to function effectively once the particular program is completed. The weaknesses in this type of approach are common knowledge and need not be enumerated. The final approach is to employ students in capacities ranging from graduate students to research tasks. On the other hand, those students fortunate enough to function as research assistants participate in activities more closely akin to those of researchers. In addition, research assistants generally work under the direction of a faculty person who spends the greater portion of his time engaged in that research.

Minority Researchers: What can be Done?

What more can be done to increase the number of minority researchers? In answer, let me focus on what large universities can do to increase minority researchers with or without external financial support. Many ask what they should do first, develop a program or recruit minorities? Rather than debate that question, I will arbitrarily discuss recruitment and then program articulation.

A review of the enrollment in higher education reveals that minorities remain a disproportionately small percentage of the student population. But some institutions traditionally hostile to Black students, for example, have made tremendous progress.

Closely allied to minority recruitment is program selection for minority group members. I am amazed, during this period in which there is supposed to be a surplus of teachers, that many large universities continue to operate teacher education programs as though there were a shortage. Institutions of higher education could, with only a little difficulty, restructure teacher education programs so that students earn an undergraduate degree in educational research. This idea is not new; undergraduate degrees in educational research were designed during the 1960's and early 1970's. The major difference was that students first earned their baccalaureate or master's degrees from predominantly Black schools and then attended large institutions with the purpose of becoming educational researchers, and they enjoyed some success. In addition, some foundations like those of the Fords and Rockefellers have also provided financial support directly to students pursuing their doctorates.

What I am recommending is that minority students who are interested and capable be encouraged to enter an undergraduate program and stay on to complete a master's in research. This means that those traditionally responsible for student teachers would now need to establish a working relationship with educational and non-educational agencies engaged in research and development activities, so that students can acquire the experiences to apply what has been taught in the classroom. Starting at the undergraduate level allows students to begin almost immediately learning what educational research is about.

On the graduate level more programs structured like the one in Educational Development at The Ohio State University are needed. This program, designed along interdisciplinary lines, provides a number of options for anyone interested in virtually any dimension of research and development. The program allows students to acquire a general understanding of educational research and to develop the particular research skills they will need. In addition, students can specialize in such areas as evaluation, project management, and educational research. Finally the Ohio State students have the opportunity to work in a variety of research settings. The educational development faculty monitors the activities of students who have completed the program and this data, along with other information enables the faculty to make any changes the program might need.

The assignment of more minority students to positions analogous to research associate represents another way of increasing the pool of potential researchers. It not only stimulates interest in research, but also helps researchers develop their skills. Perhaps most important, students obtain an appreciation for the details involved in carrying out research projects.

Research experiences can, of course, range from proposal writing to project negotiations to the organization and implementation of the project once it has been funded. The student should also be involved in evaluating the project's success or failure.

The post-doctoral fellow programs at various institutions represent still another way to develop minority researchers. Post-doctoral students often find it difficult to obtain financial support. But, post-doctoral fellows not only help the institution but also gain valuable practical experience.

Any successful program for increasing minority researchers must pay special attention to the selection of those researchers who will work with and serve as models for the students in the program. Such an individual has to be released from part of his regular duties so he can spend a greater portion of his time working with student researchers. The model that appeals to me is the one used in the physical sciences. At the institution where I work, the researcher-student ratio rarely exceeds one to three. Thus, students receive excellent supervision and have an opportunity to participate in numerous research activities.

It would not be right to conclude without some statement about the role minority students themselves can play in increasing the number of minority researchers. No longer can a member of a minority group be satisfied simply with obtaining a degree for himself. He must ask himself, what skills do I possess that can help solve the educational problems in this country. This is not to say that a degree is unimportant, only that it should be viewed as a beginning. There is still no substitute for hard work. Students must challenge both themselves and the institutions they attend so that they will not only earn a degree but also gain competence.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have suggested some general approaches, private and public organizations take to increase minority researchers at our universities. It must be clearly understood that such efforts not only require financial resources, institutional commitment, and time, but patience as well. The importance of the goal should remain in the forefront. This means constantly explaining to students, researchers, evaluators, and interested colleagues why and how the organization is spending its resources. These is no question in my mind that if foundations, governmental agencies, and large universities decide to train more minority researchers, it can be done. It may cost; but what will it cost if this country continues to waste a large segment of its human resources in solving those problems that threaten the continuity of American society? I am certain that minorities can bring a new and needed dimension to a world which has operated, in many respects, like a country club, the world of the educational researcher.